

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A miniature keyboard comprising:
a plurality of keys for inputting data to a portable electronic device;
wherein said keys of said plurality of keys are individually sized
such that multiple ones can be depressed by a single finger tip depression; and
wherein said keys comprise at least one set of keys that are raised
for providing key differentiation and to facilitate single key selection.

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2. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality
of keys comprise a first row of keys and a second row of keys and wherein the
surface of said first row of keys is raised above the surface of said second row of
keys.

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3. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said rows
decrease in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said
miniature keyboard.

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4. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said rows increase in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said miniature keyboard.

5 5. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said plurality of keys is different shapes.

6. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

7. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 2 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

8. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of keys comprise at least two columns of keys wherein the surface of a first column of keys is raised above a second column of keys.

9. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said columns decrease in height from one side of said miniature keyboard to another side of said miniature keyboard.

10. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality of keys is of different shapes.

11. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

5 12. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 8 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

13. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 1 wherein said raised set of keys comprise a substantially checkered pattern on said miniature keyboard.

10 14. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 13 wherein said set of keys is of different shapes.

15 15. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 13 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

16. A miniature keyboard as recited in Claim 13 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

20 17. A keyboard arrangement as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of keys makes a tone when pressed.

18. A keyboard arrangement as recited in Claim 1 wherein said plurality of keys requires different amount of pressures to depress.

19. A portable computer system comprising:

a processor coupled to a bus;

memory coupled to said bus;

a miniature keyboard coupled to said bus and comprising:

a plurality of keys for inputting data;

wherein said keys are individually sized such that multiple

ones can be depressed by a single fingertip depression; and

wherein said keys of said plurality of keys comprise at least one set of keys that are raised for providing key differentiation and to facilitate single key selection.

20. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 19 wherein said keys comprise at least two rows and wherein the surface of a first row of keys is raised above the surface of a second row of keys.

21. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said rows decrease in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said miniature keyboard.

22. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said rows of said keys increase in height from a top of said miniature keyboard to a bottom of said miniature keyboard.

5 23. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said plurality of keys is different shapes.

24. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said plurality of keys is arranged in substantially a QWERTY keyboard fashion.

10 25. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 20 wherein said portable electronic device is a personal digital assistant.

15 26. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 19 wherein said plurality of keys comprise at least two columns of keys wherein the surface of a first column of keys is raised above a second column of keys.

20 27. A portable computer system as recited in Claim 26 wherein said columns of said keys decrease in height from a side of said miniature keyboard to another side of said miniature keyboard.

28. A portable electronic device comprising:

a processor coupled to a bus;

a memory coupled to said bus;

a display screen coupled to said bus; and

an input mechanism comprising a plurality of keys that are individually sized such that each individual key surface is substantially smaller than a surface of a single finger depression and wherein said plurality of keys comprise a set of keys having surfaces raised relative to other keys of said plurality of keys to facilitate key navigation and key selection.

29. A portable electronic device as described in Claim 28 wherein said plurality of keys comprise alternating rows of keys of differing heights with respect to adjacent rows.

30. A portable electronic device as described in Claim 29 wherein said plurality of keys comprise alternating columns of keys of differing heights with respect to adjacent columns.

31. A portable electronic device as described in Claim 29 wherein said plurality of keys comprise alternating key diagonals of differing heights with respect to adjacent key diagonals.